

HB 2 Montana State Library Budget

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee;

For the record, my name is Lois Fitzpatrick and I am representing the Montana Library Association, which has over 500 members in public, academic, school, tribal, and special libraries and includes librarians, trustees, para-professionals; clerical staff and students.

As you have heard with the previous testimony, the budget of the Montana State Library impacts all libraries throughout the state. We are concerned that they may have to be some cuts to services, though no one knows that for sure. It depends on the vacancy savings situation. MLA would urge you to reconsider a lower percentage for the State Library. It will be difficult for them to meet this large vacancy savings at this time. A smaller percentage will still mean some cutback possibly, but it would be easier for such a small agency to attempt to meet.

MLA also urges you to consider restoring the additional part time position for Communications and Marketing at the State Library. This was originally approved by the Governor, but was reduced back to part-time with the latest revisions of the budget.

I have as a handout for you some comment from public libraries around the state telling how their services have increased with the hard economic times. Libraries are not just for reading anymore.. Libraries are active vibrant community centers that assist library users with the Internet whether looking for a job, upgrading education; applying for unemployment as well as lending best sellers and VHS and DVDs.

The Montana State Library assists all these public libraries with policy guidelines, training and of course, marketing. I believe that the public service ads that the Communications and Marketing office at the State Library has greatly contributed to the increase in library use in the state.

Please vote do pass on HB2 and please consider that the reductions to the state library impact all the libraries and Montanans.

Thank you

Lois A. Fitzpatrick

lfitzpat@carroll.edu

Montana Library Association

406-447-4341 (office);

406-447-4525 (fax); 406-431-6122 (c)

Joint Appropriations Committee on Education

January 13, 2009

Testimony for HB 2

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee;

For the record, my name is Honore Bray and I am the Director of the Missoula Public Library. I am here to support the Montana State Library's budget as proposed by the Governor.

As you heard from Nanette Gilbertson representing MLA, there are some concerns with the most recent cutbacks to this budget. I would like to address the vacancy savings.

For the first time in many years, the State Library has full staffing. There are no vacancies at this time and hopefully the staff will remain during the next biennium.

The State Library assists public libraries throughout the state with many programs, training on computers and new resources. The State Library also assists libraries in writing policies necessary for library operations. All sizes of libraries depend on the State Library for information and assistance.

The proposed 7% vacancy savings will hurt a small agency such as the State Library. Needed services may disappear. We don't know what staff changes will be made at the State Library, but a 7% reduction is bound to reduce some types of services.

I am asking that you reconsider the 7% vacancy savings for the State Library and reduce it to a lower percentage. A reduction of 7% will reduce the assistance the State Library can give to libraries and Montanans.

Please vote do pass on HB2.

Thank you.

Honore Bray

Missoula Public Library

301 E. Main St.

Missoula, MT 59802

(406) 721-2665

Joint Appropriations Committee on Education

January 13, 2009

Testimony for HB 2

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee;

For the record my name is John Finn and I am the Director of the Hearst Free Library, the public library for the city and county of Anaconda-Deer Lodge. I am here to support the Montana State Library's budget as proposed by the Governor.

I am specifically here to offer support for an important one time only request for \$400,000 over the biennium to start and to evaluate a courier service for use by Montana libraries to send requested materials to other Montana libraries.

No library could possibly purchase all published materials, nor should they. Libraries in Montana have very limited collections budgets. Thankfully, due to Interlibrary Loan and borrowing groups such as the Montana Shared Catalog Partners group, patrons do not have to go without needed material. Currently libraries throughout Montana freely share their materials with other libraries in Montana. Right now, most libraries rely on U.S. Postal Services to mail needed books, journal articles and other materials. Other libraries, Hearst Free Library included, rely on Greyhound and Trailways buses to distribute materials.

Libraries need a more reliable and less expensive alternative to buses and the US Postal Service. We believe that a dedicated courier service will be much less expensive than the postal service, and considerably more reliable than bus service. This courier service will allow libraries to continue to send materials to other Montana libraries. This service will allow people throughout the state to get the needed information or the exact book that they want to read without additional cost. The prospect of a courier service is very exciting and will bring much relief to many of the librarians in Montana.

I urge you to vote do pass on HB2.

Thank you
John Finn
Hearst Free Library
401 Main Street
Anaconda, MT 59711-1281
(406) 563-6932
jfinn@mtlib.org

Joint Appropriations Committee on Education

January 13, 2009

Testimony for HB 2

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee;

For the record, my name is Judy Hart and I am the Director of the Lewis & Clark Library in Helena and Lewis & Clark County.

I am in support of the Governor's budget for the Montana State Library.

The State Library did request an increase for one staff position, the Communications and Marketing Coordinator. This increase from part-time to full-time was removed during the latest cuts to the agency's budget.

This position is critical to Montana Libraries. Very few public libraries have the personnel that can assist with publicizing and marketing library programs and services to their communities. It provides an avenue to show their communities all that their library has to offer, and provides an opportunity to showcase accomplishments of the library.

Over the past couple of years, you might have seen the ads that were developed by this part-time office. The What's Your Story? – Find it at the Library Campaign has had a tremendous and positive impact on libraries and their users. For example, it provided the tools and resources for libraries across the state to develop and promote programming. In fact, this ad campaign won a national award.

In this economic climate, it is even more important for people to realize what an important and valuable resource their local library is. It is also important for people to receive timely information and training on computers so that they can do such things as apply for jobs and benefits.

I urge you to consider restoring this position to the full time position that was proposed by the State Library.

Please vote "do pass" on HB 2 for the Montana State Library.

Thank you.

Judy Hart

Director, Lewis & Clark Public Library

120 South Last Chance Gulch

Helena, MT 59601

447-1690 ext. 117

Comments from various libraries throughout the state concerning hard economic times and libraries

In December, the Montana State Library and the Montana Library Association asked librarians via our listserve to comment on how the hard economic times are impacting libraries. Below are some of the comments.

"Here at the Plains Public Library we are really seeing an increase in the use of the library. We have a couple of our patrons who use our wireless to do their home business because they cannot afford to have the Internet installed at their homes. We are also seeing a marketed (sp) increase of people filing unemployment from the library also. If they did not do it here, they would have to drive the 26 miles to Thompson Falls to file in the unemployment office there. ...We also have had numerous people coming in and updating their resumes and then sending them out to various areas to see if they can find work. We have construction workers looking online to see what is available in other states because of the lack of work in our area. Then there are the people who are coming in and doing the online practice tests to study for GED or the people trying to do online college classes to further their education to help them in the job market.

Thompson-Hickman County Library

Our library is experiencing increased public computer usage for filing unemployment, resumes, job searches, and credit assistance. Several more people are borrowing DVD's as they have had to let go of their subscriptions. We have also seen an increase in book club groups and they all request Interlibrary Loan services. I have one home schooled family that bring their teens to the library 3-4 times a week and they have definitely fallen on hard economic times. The father was unemployed and has just started truck driving school. They used the public computers to sign up for this school, to write letters to creditors, to file assistance paperwork, etc.

Joliet Public Library

I have seen an increase in our PAC (public access computers) in Joliet for job searches, applying for unemployment, and sharpening up their job skills by using our excel and work programs. The gas crisis increased our patron usage sharply, and we see parents frequently bringing their children to use our computers as they dropped their high-speed service and gone back to dial up because of the cost factor.

Twin Bridges Public Library

At Twin Bridges Public Library we are sending out VHS and DVDs. The usage has always been high, but I see an increase in the past few months. The video rental store closed up and the other store that had movies for rent quit renting movies. We are the only place in town to get a movie

FCL – Whitefish

I personally have had 3 people come in to use the public computers to file for unemployment in the past 3 weeks. In the previous 2 years I worked at the library, nobody asked if they could access unemployment online before.

Choteau County Library

I have assisted a few patron on filing their unemployment claims, and I would have to say that at least half a dozen have come in and used the computer to update their resumes. Our books on resume writing have gotten a work out too. The other two librarians here could attest to the same.

I take turns every Friday reading for a half hour to the Kindergarten classroom and the 1st grade classroom. Today (name of a child), a first grader said to me: "My mom says we are going to start going to the library more 'cuz its' free. We love books, but we just can't spend money on the ones we like. We'll come borrow from you instead.

Some statistics from libraries in Montana

Butte-Silver Bow Public Library.

October 2007, patrons checked out 3,365 adult titles.

October 2008, patrons checked out 4,825 adult titles. This is a 43% increase

Flathead County Library

July - December	FY 2008	FY 2009	% change
Bigfork	9549	11805	23.63%
Columbia Falls	27062	34243	26.54%
Main	150613	175681	16.64%
Marion	899	1042	15.91%
Whitefish	38086	43952	15.40%
Systemwide	226209	266723	17.91%

Bitterroot Public Library

Total *circulation* in fiscal years at the Bitterroot Public Library:

05/06	102,462	
06/07	108,545	5% increase from previous year
07/08	117,383	8% increase from previous year

Comparing the circulation in the first 6 months of this fiscal year to the first 6 months last year:

7/1/07-12/31/07	52,284	
7/1/08-12/31/08	59,477	already a 13% increase!

Comparing the *number of persons visiting the library* in the first 6 months of this fiscal year to the first 6 months of last year:

7/1/07-12/31/07	38,244	
7/1/08-12/31/08	45,282	an 18% increase!!